

said prism member having at least four optical surfaces having a transmitting or reflecting optical action, wherein a space surrounded by said at least four optical surfaces is filled with a single medium having a refractive index (n) larger than 1 ( $n > 1$ ),

said at least four optical surfaces including a first surface having both a transmitting action and a reflecting action and disposed on a side of said prism member that is closer to said observer's eyeball; a second surface having a reflecting action and disposed to face said first surface across said medium, said second surface being at least decentered or tilted with respect to an observer's visual axis; a third surface having a reflecting action and disposed to face said first surface across said medium at a position substantially adjacent to said second surface; and a fourth surface disposed such that one end thereof is substantially adjacent to said first surface, and the other end thereof is substantially close to said third surface,

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Cont wherein at least said third surface has a totally reflecting action, and said first surface, said single medium and said third surface are arranged to have an external-scene observation action by which an external scene can be observed through said first surface, said single medium and said third surface, and

wherein the first surface is identical in surface shape with the third surface.

16. (Amended) An image observation apparatus according to any one of claims 12 to 14, wherein said first surface and said third surface are formed from curved surfaces, respectively.

B2 17. (Amended) An image observation apparatus according to any one of claims 12 to 14, wherein said first surface and said third surface are formed from spherical surfaces, respectively.

18. (Amended) An image observation apparatus according to any one of claims 12 to 14, wherein said first surface and said third surface are planar shaped surfaces.

19. (Amended) An image observation apparatus according to any one of claims 12 to 14, which satisfies the following condition:

$$-0.5 \leq \phi_{t1} \leq 0.5 \text{ (1/millimeter)} \quad \dots(3)$$

where  $\phi_{t1}$  is a composite power of said first and third surfaces at respective arbitrary regions thereof.

B2 20. (Amended) An image observation apparatus according to claim 12, wherein said prism member is fixed at a same position regardless of whether the observer views the image formed by said image forming means or an image of the external scene.

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B3 22. (Amended) An image observation apparatus according to any one of claims 12 to 14, wherein said prism member has switching means that causes observation modes to change between observation of the image formed by said image forming means and observation of an image of the external scene, said switching means having a function of moving said prism member.

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B4 24. (Amended) An image observation apparatus according to claim 22, wherein said switching means causes said prism member to move along a plane containing an optical path of an axial principal ray.

25. (Amended) An image observation apparatus according to claim 22, wherein said switching means causes said prism member to move in a direction perpendicular to the observer's visual axis.

26. (Amended) An image observation apparatus according to claim 22, wherein said switching means causes said prism member to rotate.

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B5 33. (Amended) An image observation apparatus according to claim 12, further comprising positioning means for positioning said image forming means and said ocular optical system with respect to an observer's head.

34. (Amended) An image observation apparatus according to claim 12, further comprising support means for supporting at least a pair of said image observation apparatuses at a predetermined spacing.

35. (Amended) A prism optical element or prism member according to claim 12, wherein said second surface and said third surface act as different surfaces in terms of optical action but are formed structurally from a single surface.

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See the attached Appendix for the changes made to effect the above claims.

Please add the following new claim:

52. (New) An image observation apparatus comprising image forming means and an ocular optical system having an action by which an image formed by said image forming means is led to an eyeball of an observer,

wherein said ocular optical system includes at least a prism member,

said prism member having at least four optical surfaces having a transmitting or reflecting optical action, wherein a space surrounded by said at least four optical surfaces is filled with a single medium having a refractive index ( $n$ ) larger than 1 ( $n > 1$ ),

86 said at least four optical surfaces including a first surface having both a transmitting action and a reflecting action and disposed on a side of said prism member that is closer to said observer's eyeball; a second surface having a reflecting action and disposed to face said first surface across said medium, said second surface being at least decentered or tilted with respect to an observer's visual axis; a third surface having a reflecting action and disposed to face said first surface across said medium at a position substantially adjacent to said second surface; and a fourth surface disposed such that one end thereof is substantially adjacent to said first surface, and the other end thereof is substantially close to said third surface,

wherein at least said third surface has a totally reflecting action, and said first surface, said single medium and said third surface are arranged to have an external-scene observation action by which an external scene can be observed through said first surface, said single medium and said third surface, and

wherein the surface shape of the first surface, and the third surface is determined such that the external scene observed via the first surface and the third surface is the same as the external scene observed other than via the first surface and the third surface.

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